

## Accommodations Toolkit

# Clarify/Simplify/Repeat Directions: States' Accessibility Policies, 2023



This summary of states' accessibility policies for **clarify/simplify/repeat directions** is part of the *Accommodations Toolkit* published by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO).<sup>[1]</sup> The toolkit also contains a summary of the research literature on clarify/simplify/repeat directions.

Accessibility policies often have several tiers of accessibility features: universal features, designated features, and accommodations.<sup>[2]</sup> Figure 1 summarizes how states included clarify/simplify/repeat directions in their accessibility policies for students with disabilities in 2023. Figure 2 summarizes how states included clarify/simplify/repeat directions in their accessibility policies for English learners in 2023. Table 1 shows how clarify/simplify/repeat directions was included in the policies, while Table 2 contains additional details and specifications.

**Figure 1. States' Accessibility Policies for Students with Disabilities for Clarify/Simplify/Repeat Directions, 2023**

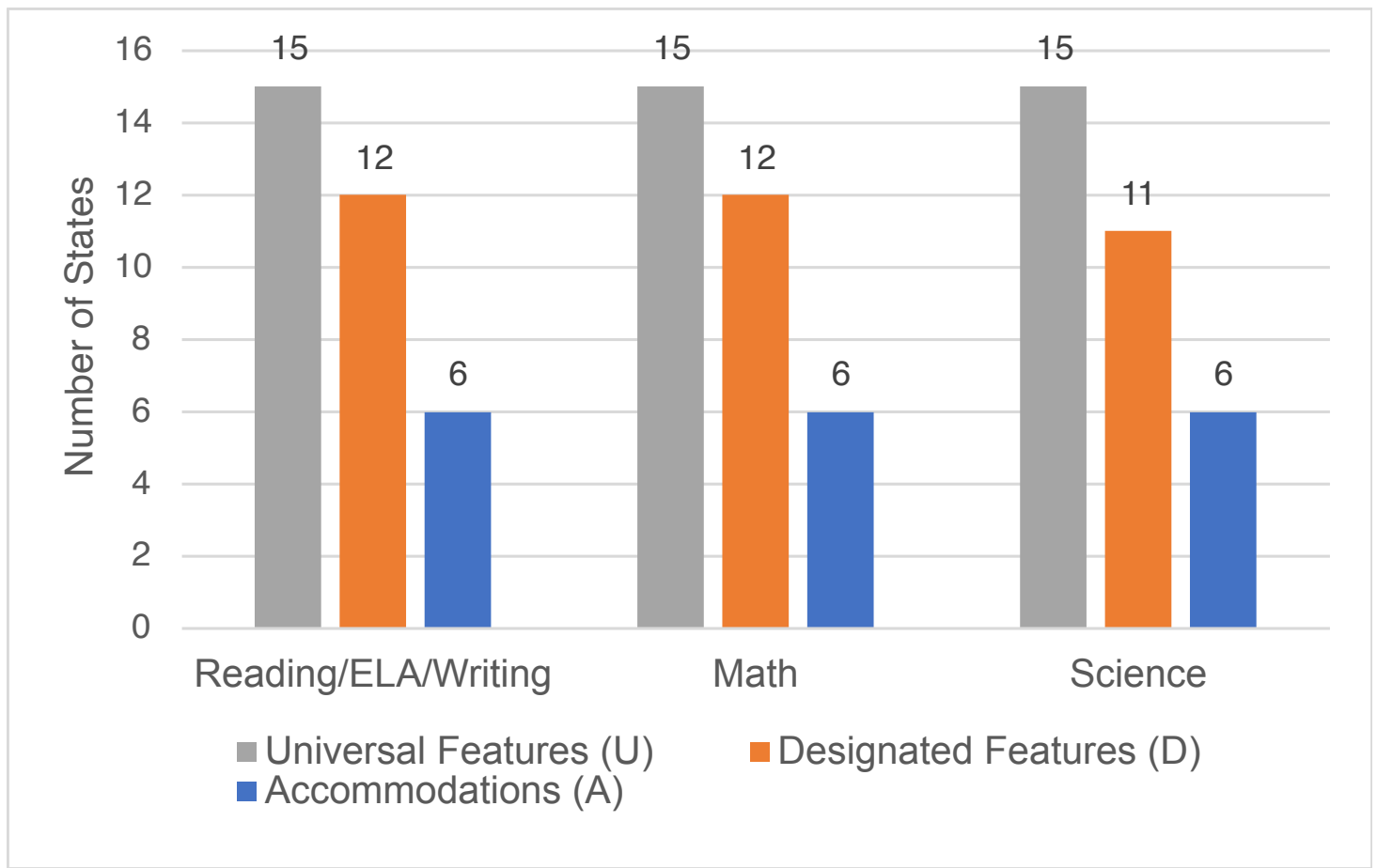
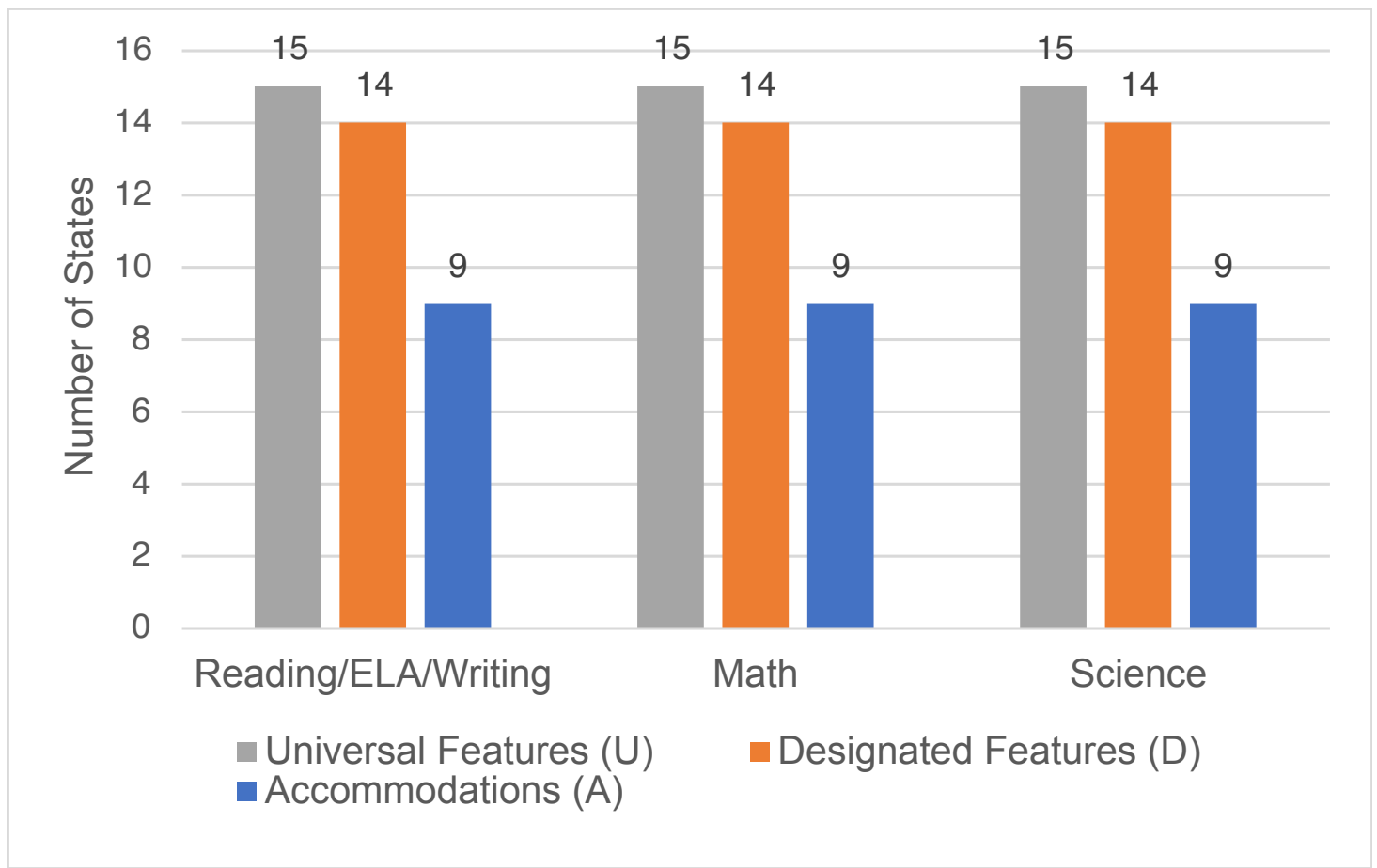


**Figure 2. States' Accessibility Policies for English Learners for Clarify/Simplify/Repeat Directions, 2023**



# Table 1. Accommodations Policies for Clarify/Simplify/Repeat Directions by State, 2023

U = Universal Feature, D = Designated Feature, A = Accommodation, ELA = English Language Arts, X = Allowed, SD =

| State                | Reading/ELA/Writing |   |       | Math |
|----------------------|---------------------|---|-------|------|
|                      | U                   | D | A     | U    |
| Alabama              |                     |   |       |      |
| Alaska               |                     |   | SD, E |      |
| Arizona              |                     |   | E     |      |
| Arkansas             |                     |   |       |      |
| California           |                     | X |       |      |
| Colorado             | X                   |   |       | X    |
| Connecticut          |                     | E |       |      |
| Delaware             |                     | X |       |      |
| District of Columbia | X                   |   | E     | X    |

|                      |   |   |             |   |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------|---|
| <b>Florida</b>       |   |   | <b>SD</b>   |   |
| <b>Georgia</b>       | X |   |             | X |
| <b>Hawaii</b>        |   | X |             |   |
| <b>Idaho</b>         |   | X |             |   |
| <b>Illinois</b>      | X |   | <b>E</b>    | X |
| <b>Indiana</b>       |   |   | <b>P(E)</b> |   |
| <b>Iowa</b>          |   |   |             |   |
| <b>Kansas</b>        |   |   |             |   |
| <b>Kentucky</b>      |   |   | <b>P</b>    |   |
| <b>Louisiana</b>     | X |   |             | X |
| <b>Maine</b>         |   |   |             |   |
| <b>Maryland</b>      | X |   | <b>E</b>    | X |
| <b>Massachusetts</b> | X |   | <b>E</b>    | X |
| <b>Michigan</b>      | X |   |             | X |

|                       |          |          |           |          |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| <b>Minnesota</b>      |          | <b>E</b> |           |          |
| <b>Mississippi</b>    |          |          |           |          |
| <b>Missouri</b>       |          |          |           |          |
| <b>Montana</b>        |          | <b>X</b> |           |          |
| <b>Nebraska</b>       | <b>X</b> |          | <b>E</b>  | <b>X</b> |
| <b>Nevada</b>         |          | <b>X</b> |           |          |
| <b>New Hampshire</b>  |          |          |           |          |
| <b>New Jersey</b>     | <b>X</b> |          |           | <b>X</b> |
| <b>New Mexico</b>     |          | <b>X</b> |           |          |
| <b>New York</b>       |          |          | <b>SD</b> |          |
| <b>North Carolina</b> |          |          |           |          |
| <b>North Dakota</b>   |          | <b>X</b> |           |          |
| <b>Ohio</b>           | <b>X</b> |          |           | <b>X</b> |

|                       |   |   |       |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|-------|---|
| <b>Oklahoma</b>       |   |   | SD, E |   |
| <b>Oregon</b>         | X |   |       | X |
| <b>Pennsylvania</b>   |   |   | SD    |   |
| <b>Rhode Island</b>   | X |   | E     | X |
| <b>South Carolina</b> | X |   |       | X |
| <b>South Dakota</b>   |   | X |       |   |
| <b>Tennessee</b>      |   | X |       |   |
| <b>Texas</b>          |   |   |       |   |
| <b>Utah</b>           | P | P | P     | P |
| <b>Vermont</b>        |   | X |       |   |
| <b>Virginia</b>       |   |   |       |   |
| <b>Washington</b>     |   | X | SD    |   |
| <b>West Virginia</b>  | X |   |       | X |

|                                                   |    |    |   |    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|----|---|----|
| <b>Wisconsin</b>                                  |    |    |   |    |
| <b>Wyoming</b>                                    |    |    |   |    |
| <b>Total<br/>(Students with<br/>Disabilities)</b> | 15 | 12 | 6 | 15 |
| <b>Total (English<br/>Learners)</b>               | 15 | 14 | 9 | 15 |

**Table 2. Details and Specifications: States' Clarify/Simplify/Repeat Directions Accessibility Policies**

| State      | Details/Specifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alaska     | <p><b>Accommodation (Students with Disabilities):</b></p> <p>Clarification of test directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student requests clarification</li> <li>• Student restates directions</li> </ul> <p>A test administrator may provide clarification of assessment directions.</p> <p>Read aloud or repeat written or oral test directions, in English or the native language:<br/>Translation should be an exact translation, as much as possible; additional clarifying ideas or examples are not allowed.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>Clarification of test directions in English or the native language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student requests clarification</li> <li>• Student restates directions</li> </ul> <p>Clarification should not provide additional directions or examples.</p> |
| Arizona    | <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>Simplified Test Administration Directions: The Test Administrator may provide verbal directions in simplified English for the scripted directions from the Test Administration Directions manual. This must take place in a setting that does not disturb other students.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| California | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>The test administrator or test examiner can simplify or paraphrase the test directions found in a test administration manual. Refer to the <i>Guidelines for Simplified Test Directions</i> at <a href="https://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/guidelines-for-simplified-test-directions.pdf">https://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/guidelines-for-simplified-test-directions.pdf</a>  (<a href="https://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/guidelines-for-simplified-test-directions.pdf">https://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/guidelines-for-simplified-test-directions.pdf</a>).</p>                                                                                                                                 |

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| <b>Colorado</b>    | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>Upon request from a student, the Test Administrator clarifies general administration directions (SAY directions) only after reading the directions word-for-word from the Test Administrator Manual. A student may also raise their hand and request repetition of the directions. Clarifying or reading passages or test questions for students is not allowed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Connecticut</b> | <p><b>Designated Feature (English Learners):</b></p> <p>Native Language Reader of Teacher Script (Located in the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Test Administration Manual) by a qualified person) (Math, ELA, Science): All teacher test directions/script as published in the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Test Administration Manuals may be read and clarified in English, or using the student's native language for EL/MLs who have been identified as needing this support. A noncertified or certified staff person trained in test administration and security may administer this designated support.</p>                                                                              |
| <b>Delaware</b>    | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>Simplifying or paraphrasing test administration directions ONLY in English. The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual according to The DeSSA Simplified Directions Protocol in Appendix A7. Students who need additional support understanding the test direction may benefit from this resource. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers. If a student needs simplified test directions in their Native Language, complete the Human Interpreter–Native Language section on Appendix A–3.</p> |

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| <b>District of Columbia</b> | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>Test administrator reads aloud, repeats, or clarifies the general administration directions only. No passages or test items may be clarified. A student may raise his or her hand and request the directions be repeated.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>General Administration Directions Clarified as Needed in Student's Native Language (by Test Administrator):</p> <p>Test administrator clarifies general administration instructions only. No part of the test may be clarified or translated. Test administrators providing this accommodation should be literate and fluent in English, as well as in the student's native language. If this is not feasible, then the test administrator may be assisted by a translator who speaks the language of the student. Students should be given ample time to process directions and ask clarifying questions about the directions. Students must be tested in a separate setting with other students needing the same accommodation to minimize distractions.</p> |
| <b>Florida</b>              | <p><b>Accommodation (Students with Disabilities):</b></p> <p>Test directions may be repeated, clarified, or summarized as many times as a student requests.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Georgia</b>              | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>Read directions aloud and repeat as many times as needed, either by request of the student or as determined by the teacher.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Hawaii</b>               | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual according to the Guidelines for Simplified Test Directions.</p> <p>Students who need additional support understanding the test direction may benefit from this resource. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| <b>Idaho</b>     | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the Guidelines for Simplified Test Directions.</p> <p>Students who need additional support understanding the test direction may benefit from this resource. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Illinois</b>  | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>General Administration Directions Clarified (by Test Administrator): The Test Administrator clarifies general administration directions only. No passages or test items may be clarified.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>General Administration Directions Clarified in Student's Native Language (by Test Administrator): The Test Administrator clarifies general administration directions only in the student's native language. Test Administrators, or other qualified interpreters, providing this accommodation should ideally be literate and fluent in English, as well as in the student's native language; or Test Administrator may be assisted by a translator who speaks the language of the student, if available.</p> |
| <b>Indiana</b>   | <p>NOTE: Clarifying test directions in the student's home language is not an allowable accommodation or support in Indiana. Translation of directions for any state assessment is only permissible when utilizing an approved, translated script.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Kentucky</b>  | <p>Paraphrasing/Simplified Language is not a supported accommodation for state assessments. The proctor may only paraphrase or simplify directions. Test questions or answer choices may not be altered. This includes directions embedded within test questions. Once time begins on a state assessment, nothing can be paraphrased.</p> <p>Test Administrators should NOT do the following for the Spring 2023 Kentucky Summative Assessments and Quality of School Climate and Safety (QSCS) Survey: Answer questions related to the response (no hints, restatements, interpretations, rephrasing for clarification).</p>                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Louisiana</b> | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>General Administration Directions Clarified (by Test Administrator): The Test Administrator may clarify general administration directions only. No passages or test items may be clarified.</p> <p>General Administration Directions Read Aloud and Repeated as Needed (by Test Administrator): The Test Administrator may read aloud the general administration directions only. Students may raise their hand and request that directions may be repeated.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| <b>Maryland</b>      | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>General Directions Clarified: The Test Administrator clarifies general administration directions only. No passages or test items may be clarified.</p> <p>General Directions Read Aloud and Repeated as Needed: The Test Administrator reads aloud the general administration directions only. A student may raise his or her hand and request the directions be repeated.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>General Administration Directions Clarified as Needed in Student's Native Language (by Test Administrator):</p> <p>The Test Administrator clarifies general administration directions only in the student's native language. Test Administrators or other qualified interpreters providing this accommodation should ideally be literate and fluent in English as well as in the student's native language, or they may be assisted by a translator who speaks the language of the student, if available.</p> |
| <b>Massachusetts</b> | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>Test administrator reads aloud, repeats, or clarifies general test administration directions from the Test Administration Manual scripts to student, as needed.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration directions in English (from the Test Administration Manual scripts).</p> <p>Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration directions (from the Test Administration Manual scripts) in student's native language, if a native language speaker is available.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Michigan</b>      | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>To ensure that students are not disadvantaged on the actual test questions, directions can be repeated or restated; also, students may ask for clarification, if needed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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| <b>Minnesota</b>  | <p><b>Designated Feature (English Learners):</b></p> <p>Simplified or clarified directions can be provided by the Test Monitor for English learners; they are not provided by MDE. The Test Monitor can simplify or clarify the scripted Testing Directions using vocabulary that the individual student would understand and therefore know how to take the test. However, the Test Monitor cannot change the meaning of the directions or provide information that would lead or cue the student. The use of this linguistic support should be documented on the Test Administration Report (TAR).</p>                                   |
| <b>Montana</b>    | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>Simplified Test Directions: The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the Test Administration Manual. Students who need additional support understanding the test direction may benefit from this resource. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Nebraska</b>   | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>Test administrator rereads, simplifies, or clarifies directions aloud for student as needed. Students that have directions read aloud during classroom instructional activities. Students with focusing difficulties and visual impairments.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>Test administrator simplifies, explains, or clarifies directions in native language.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Nevada</b>     | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>Simplified Test Directions: The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual according to the Guidelines for Simplified Test Directions. Students who need additional support understanding the test direction may benefit from this resource. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.</p>                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>New Jersey</b> | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>General Administration Directions Clarified (by Test Administrator): The Test Administrator clarifies general administration directions only. No passages or test items may be clarified.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>General Administration Directions Clarified in Student's Native Language: The Test Administrator clarifies general administration directions only in the student's native language. Test Administrators providing this accommodation should ideally be literate and fluent in English, as well as in the student's native language, if available.</p> |

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| <b>New Mexico</b>   | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>For PBT, TA clarifies general administration directions only, NOT passages or test items. Embedded in CBT.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>New York</b>     | <p><b>Accommodation (Students with Disabilities):</b></p> <p>Only clarification or simplification of directions is permitted on State assessments when required by the IEP/504 plan.</p> <p>For students who are deaf or hard of hearing: Test administration directions may be clarified or interpreted if the substance of the directions is not changed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>North Dakota</b> | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>Simplified Test Directions: An Educator or test administrator rephrases or simplifies the directions for learners during instruction and assessment.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Ohio</b>         | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>The test administrator must read the scripted general directions for starting all test administrations and must not deviate from the script. After the test administrator has read the directions, students may ask the test administrator to repeat or clarify directions. General directions may be translated or interpreted (for example, in the English learner's native language or American Sign Language [ASL]). General directions include the scripted information for students that comes before the test starts. Once students have begun the test, nothing may be clarified.</p> |
| <b>Oklahoma</b>     | <p><b>Accommodation (Students with Disabilities):</b></p> <p>Student may ask for clarification, simplification, signage of directions. This does not include test questions or answer choices. Students may have directions reread for each page of questions.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>Student may ask for clarification, simplification, signage of directions. This does not include test questions or answer choices. Students may have directions reread for each page of questions.</p>                                                                                                       |
| <b>Oregon</b>       | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>Students can raise their hand at any time and ask the test administrator to clarify or explain directions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| <b>Pennsylvania</b>   | <p><b>Accommodation (Students with Disabilities):</b></p> <p>The Test Administrator (TA) may provide clarification of test directions or direct the student to the correct section of the test.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Rhode Island</b>   | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>Read aloud, repeat, clarify general test directions: The test administrator may read aloud, repeat, or clarify the test directions for a student, in English. The test administrator must be available and meet the criteria for administering a state assessment as outlined in the Test Coordinator Handbook.</p> <p>General Test Directions do not include any part of any test item, response options, or text (reading passages, charts, graphs, or diagrams) included with the test item.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (English Learners):</b></p> <p>Read aloud/repeat/clarify general administration directions in English (by test administrator).</p> <p>Read aloud/repeat/clarify general administration directions in student's native language (by test administrator).</p> |
| <b>South Carolina</b> | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>A tool that allows for TAs to reread or sign directions from the TAM or script as requested by students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow students to ask questions about directions and procedures; you may not answer questions about test items.</li> <li>• Each student should hear all of the administration directions for each test. Do not allow administration directions to be read over a public address system.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>South Dakota</b>   | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>Simplified Test Directions: The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the test administration manual according to the <i>Simplified Test Directions guidelines</i>. Students who need additional support understanding the test directions may benefit from this resource. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| <b>Tennessee</b>     | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>General Administration Directions Read Aloud and Clarified or Repeated as Needed: The test administrator reads aloud the general administration directions only per the test administration manual. A student may raise his or her hand and request the directions be repeated. The test administrator may clarify directions upon request. No passages or items may be clarified.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Utah</b>          | <p>Clarification of directions is not allowed on any assessment.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Vermont</b>       | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the test administration manual.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Washington</b>    | <p><b>Designated Feature:</b></p> <p>The TA simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the appropriate TA Script of Student Directions following the directions outlined in the Guidelines for Simplified Test Directions for Washington State Assessments. Students who need additional support understanding the test directions may benefit from this resource. This support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.</p> <p><b>Accommodation (Students with Disabilities):</b></p> <p>Repeat and clarify directions; Modify/model directions; Rephrase directions; Give short, concise directions; Give extra time to process information; Repeat directions in more than one way</p> |
| <b>West Virginia</b> | <p><b>Universal Feature:</b></p> <p>Students can raise their hand at any time to ask the test administrator to clarify or explain directions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## Footnotes

▶ [1]

States' accessibility policies on clarifying directions were obtained through the examination and analysis of publicly available information, including accommodations manuals or other policy documents, on state department of education websites. The policies were gathered from states' websites in June 2023. The information in the tables from each state was coded based on information in the state policy.

▶ [2]

*Universal Features* are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content. *Designated Features* are available to any student as long as an educator (or team of educators, with student and parent input) indicates that they would be helpful given the student's characteristics and needs. *Accommodations* are changes in procedures or materials ensure equitable access to instructional and assessment content and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. Accommodations are generally available to students for whom there is documentation on an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 accommodations plan; some states also have offered accommodations to English learners.

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